

Comfort for Parents,

Mourning over their

Hopeful Childzen,

THAT

DYE YOUNG.

In a Funeral Discourse upon

J E R. 31. xvii.

*And there is Hope in thine End, saith
the Lord.*

By *Thomas Whitaker*, Minister of
the Gospel at *Leeds*, in *York-shire*.

L O N D O N: Printed for *John Dunton*,
at the *Raven*, in the *Poultrey*, 1693.

Comfort for Parents

Mourning and

Helpful Philanthropy

THAT
DYE YOUNG

In a Funeral Discourse upon

Jer. 31. xiii.

And there is hope in mine Father's house
the Lord.

By Thomas Webster, Minister of
the Gospel at Leeds, in York-shire.

LONDON: Printed for John Dunton
at the Raven, in the Strand, 1707.

THE PREFACE.

AT the Desire of Mr. Nicholas Dunwell, who was particularly concerned, both for the Preaching and Publication of the following Sermon, I write this Preface. In his Hopeful Child he saw many Pleasant and Amiable things, but now that dear Comfort of his Life, being withdrawn, as he acquiesces in the Holy Providence of God, that

01 A 2 causes

The Preface.

causes many times those Flowers to wither by an Early Decay, which perhaps we should be very apt to doat upon; so he doubts not but this Discourse, made by that Minister, under whose Instructions he sits with great Delight, will contribute to the Good of others, especially those who are yet in the Morning of their Age.

I could not in Civility refuse the prefixing my poor Name, such as it is, tho' the worthy Author needs no Recommendation, much less mine; his Skill in Spiritual Affairs, and the Success wherewith God has blest his zealous Endeavours for the Good of Souls, render it needless for me

The Preface.

to say any thing that hath so much as
the Shew of Flattery: he neither
expects it, nor does my Genius lead
me to say much of one who is too mo-
dest to bear his own just Praises,
and who has so many Witnesses of his
fitness for his Honourable Work a-
mongst his Numerous and Happy Au-
ditory, which was, I doubt not, Edi-
fied at the Hearing of the following
Sermon, and will be more so at the
Reading of it; it must be their own
fault if they receive not considerable
Benefit from a Subject, so suited to the
use of Parents and Children, and
which is so well managed.

The Preface.

I shall only speak a little to those that are Young, and to those Parents, who are shedding Tears for the Loss of Hopeful Children.

Those that are Young have but little Experience of the Sorrows and Calamities of Life; and in a World, where they have been for so short a space, every thing appears to them as Gay and Fine; they are but beginning to Travel, and finding no Pain nor Trouble at present, promise to themselves many smooth Years, and to be at ease a long while; and being Charmed and Blinded with sensual Pleasures, they put afar off the Evil Day.

But

The Preface.

But I would desire them to consider, that they may be taken away betimes, that their Sun may be Clouded a little after he is risen, and that now in their full Strength and Vigor it is the most proper season, wherein to prepare for another World; and if they should live to be old, they'll find no Inconveniencies from such an Early Preparation. It will be the Joy of their Parents, and their own Joy; God will multiply his Favours, and he will be pleased to see them in his Vineyard in the Dawn of Life; this will enable them to run their Christian Race with an eager haste, and the

The Preface.

Brightness of their Examples will allure others to run for the same Blessed Crown; whereas, if they be secure, careless, and unthoughtful of Eternity, their Minds will be laid waste, and be like the Field of the Sluggard, all overgrown with Thorns and Bryers, with every evil and unpleasant thing: This Earth with its fair Charms and Temptations, will chain them to its self, and the Devil will lead them Captive at his Will, he will insult over them in their growing Age, and strive to keep them from deserting his Service when they were before his Volunteers. And it must be a doleful, and Melancholy Prospect

The Preface

to their poor Parents to see their dear Children run in the way of Hell, and like to be the fuel of Eternal Flames. I would beg of them to read this Sermon, and other good Discourses, that may give them a right sense of things, and especially to delight in the Holy Scriptures, the frequent perusal of which will keep them from the Vanities of Youth, and with admirable Clearness and Efficacy direct them to cleanse their ways, and while they read in so Divine a Book, to pray to the great Father of Light, that he would irradiate their souls with Vital Beams, that they may not only see the Light, but feel the warmth of Truth;

The Preface

Truth; and then, if they die early, if they go to Bed betimes, they'll fall asleep in Jesus, and never complain that they were in Heaven too soon; if they be good, 'tis no great matter whether their Lamps be extinguished at Midnight, or at Noon.

As to Parents, who have lost good Children, whom they loved with all imaginable Tenderneſs, tho' it is impoſſible for them not to ſhed tears at the pleaſant Images of themſelves, their pretty Carriage, their little innocent Actions, their ſerious Diſcourſe, and their Holy Prayers, yet they have a great many things to ſweeten the bitterneſs of their Grief.

Oh

The Preface.

Ob what a Spring is it of daily Consolation, to think, that a part of themselves is in Heaven! And that tho' Death has pluckt from their Embraces, a Child. that was so Amiable and so good, yet instead of groaning under the miseries of Life, he is praising God above with Loud and Cheerful Hallelujahs: How reviving must it be to think that the Supream Kuler, whose, they and theirs are, has removed the sweet Flowers that they look'd upon with Joy, into the Coelstial Paradise! It is reviving to think that these little Vessels are filled with an Early Glory, and gone to see the Face of their Heavenly

The Preface.

Heavenly Father, as their Angels did before, the Parents of such Children ought not to shed unprofitable Tears; for all their Sorrows will not cause a Spring in the Grave, nor make the lovely plants to grow again: They should not always keep their Finger on the Sore; for the Rod that chastens them is dipt in Honey, and managed by a Father's Hand, who must be more to them than many Sons and Daughters: Their Love to these Amiable things should not exceed their Love to God; he must be more to them than their Life, which yet is a dearer and sweeter thing than all their other Comforts: What Graces soever adorned the Bodies of their Children;

The Preface.

Children, what Perfections soever enriched their Souls, yet it should support them to think that whilst they are left to many a Cold and Stormy Winter, they whom they once loved, are arrived at their home; and tho' they see them no more in their Families, yet they shall meet them with Pleasure at the Great Day, and never part again; and then those Bodies which the Grave for a season preyed upon, shall be like the Glorious Body of our Lord. You that are Parents, may Lawfully drop some tears over the Graves of your departed Children, but you ought not to bury your selves alive, nor to be made unserviceable to God by excess of Grief. You prayed that they might be good, and they

The Preface.

they were so; you prayed that they might get to Heaven and they are gone thither only you Mourn that they are there soon. Weep not for them, but for yourselves; you may live to see dismal times, and heavy judgments, which may occasion a general Amazement and Consternation; and which may make many a Mother say, Blessed is the Woman that never bear, and the Paps that never gave Suck. Remember that this time is short, and it signifies little, that one Rose wither in the Morning, and another in the Afternoon, seeing all will certainly decay. If you see some dye in the Bud, and in the green Youth, you must be satisfied, tho' you begg'd that they might not be gather'd

The Preface.

till they were laden with a great deal of Fruit. It must comfort you to think that they are like the Early Dew, exhaled to Heaven betimes, though the shining Drops are vanished. These young Heirs of Glory peep'd into the World; they saw nothing here but Vexation, Sin and Misery, and so they went out again. If you say we Mourn for our Loss, as being a sad Discovery of Wrath against us, we are afraid our Children were taken away from us in Anger; but is it not a Testimony of Love to deliver any out of Pain betimes, and not to suffer them to Languish very long? Those that God has dearly loved have died soon; the first Person that went to Heaven died in the Flower of his Age, even Abel, the Righteous, so did Abijah, Josiah, and our Excellent King Edward the VI. These all died Young; and was it an Argument of Divine Displeasure to let them
Conquer

The Preface.

Conquer and Triumph almost as soon as they began to Fight, whilst others must endure the heat of the Day, and many a furious Combat, ere they march from the Field of Battle?

That God would by his own Gracious Presence supply the want of all outward Comforts to those who are bereaved of their Dear and Hopeful Children, and that he would Bless this Sermon, and the Author, and that he may long shine in the Sphere where he is placed, for the Good of many Souls, Is the hearty Desire of,

Timothy Rogers.

Comfort

Comfort for Parents,

Mourning over their

Hopeful Children,

That Dye Young.

J E R. 31. xvii.

*And there is Hope in thine End, saith
the Lord.*

THE two great Supports of
a Christian in this Vale of
Tears, are a lively Faith, and
a steady Hope. For, as a Christian's
highest Happiness lies within the
Vail, so *Faith* and *Hope* alone can ^{2 Cor.}
give him a Comfortable Prospect of ^{5. 7.}
what Sense and Sight cannot yet
reach unto.

B

They

Comfort for Parents,

*They minister a singular Support,
both in Life and Death.*

In the greatest Troubles of Life,
Psal. 42. *Faith* in the Perspective of the Pro-
10, 11. mise, can spy Light thro' the darkest
Cloud: And *Hope*, being encouraged
by *Faith*, can wait with Patience for
an happy Issue.

In the Approaches of *Death*, *Faith*
can cast its Eagle-Eye over this Dead
Sea, unto the Fragrant Mountains of
Spices beyond: And *Hope* can ani-
2 *Tim.* mate the Thoughtful Soul with a
1. 12. Gracious Expectation, that a few
Moments will waft it safe over the
Gulph, and make it Possessor of those
Glorious Mansions.

Does God send his grim Messen-
ger, *Death*, to summon our selves
to come away? It's an Encourage-
ment, beyond Expression, to have
Psal. 17. *Faith* and *Hope* lead us through the
15. dark

Comfort for Parents,

3

dark Passage, till *Faith* be Converted into Vision, and *Hope* advanced into Fruition.

Is it our dear Relations or Friends, that God sends the tremendous Summons to? What a blessed Staff of Support is it to the Surviving Mourners, when we have *Hope* in their *Latter End*?

The Departing Soul can venture *Psal. 23:*
comfortably upon, and walk chear-⁴
fully thro' the Gloomy Valley of the
Shadow of *Death*, when attended
with two such Refreshing Compani-
ons, as *Faith* and *Hope*, truly ground-
ed upon the Promises of the *Word*,
and the Experience of a Gracious
Principle in its own Heart.

And we that survive, can part
with our *Dying Relations*, with a
more chearful Resignation, when we
are encouraged with some Comfor-

Comfort for Parents,

table Grounds of *Faith* and *Hope*:
That their Departure hence is but
their happy Passage into a far better
State and *Place*.

Accordingly, This is the very
Consideration, which a Gracious
God Administers for the Support of
the *Mourners* in the Text.

*And there is Hope in thine End,
saith the Lord.*

In opening the Words, we shall
consider :

1. The Primary and Litteral Im-
port of them.

2. What Practical Improvement
may be made of them.

1. We shall take a short look into
the Primary, Original Sense of the
words. For the understanding where-
of, you need only to have Recourse
unto *v. 15.* of the Chapter, where
you have *Rachel*, (*i. e.*) The poor dis-
tressed

Comfort for Parents,

5

stressed Tribe of Benjamin (who were Descendents from Rachel) Mourning for her Children, because they were not.

A great many of them were very probably cut off by the Fatal stroke of Death, and the rest were ready to be carried away Captive into Babylon, which was as a civil Death: Upon which doleful Occasion, this Bereaved Tribe breaks out into a most bitter Lamentation; the Dirty of whose Mournful Elegy was, *That her Children were not; They were lost and gone, and she was like to enjoy them no more.*

Now to stem the Tyde of these Swelling Waters of Mara, God seasonably suggests this Relieving Ground of Comfort in the Text, *There is Hope in thine End, saith the Lord.*

Comfort for Parents,

The Sense whereof amounts to this purpose: Why dost thou Mourn, as one utterly undone, or as one, whose Case admits of no Relief, or Comfort? Tho' thou be as a Desolate Mother, bereaved of her Children, yet there is Hope, both respecting thy self, and respecting those, whom thou concludes to be utterly lost and gone. Those that are Dead, and must return to this *Life* no more; If they be transplanted to a better, what Reason is there to indulge an Immoderate Sorrow for them?

And those that are carried into Captivity, and ready to be put into their dismal Graves in *Babylon*; they shall have a seasonable Resurrection, and shall return unto their own Border in due time, which may be a sufficient Ground of Consolation as to them.

This

This being the Literal Import of the Words, we come now,

2. To consider what practical Improvement may be made of them, with respect to Cases of a like Nature. Now, in order hereunto, you may observe from the Account that's already given; that the Words are a Supporting Cordial, reach'd forth by the Compassionate Hand of Heaven, to *Disconsolate Parents*, bleeding over the Loss of their *dear Children*.

And tho' there may be a considerable difference in some Particulars, betwixt the Case in the Text, and other Cases, that may bear some Proportion thereunto; yet from the general Design of the Words, we may (without any great Force) deduce from them this useful Observation.

Comfort for Parents,

Observe. That it is a Sovereign Support to surviving Parents, under the Loss of their *Departed Children*; That there is *Hope in their Latter End.*

Children are Parts and Branches of ourSelves; OurSelves are multiplied into so many lesser Sprigs; yea, our own very Bowels spun out into so many smaller Threads: And consequently, when these, by an Irresistible *Hand*, come to be rent and torn from us; it cannot but be very Grievous to Innocent, and much more to Corrupted Nature.

But when there is a well-grounded *Hope* in their *latter End*; when there is a good Foundation to believe, *That they are made Branches in Christ, before they are pluckt away as Branches from our Selves*: That there are some Lineaments of the New

Comfort for Parents,

9

New Creature formed in them, before they are call'd off the Stage of this *Old Creation*: This cannot but open a Refreshing Spring of Consolation, to *Mournful Parents*, to assuage their swelling Sorrows, and to stanch their bleeding Wounds.

In the management of this Point, we shall endeavour to shew.

1. What are those Symptoms, which may administer good Ground of Hope, with respect to our *dying Children*.

2. In what Respects this is such a Sovereign Support, to Surviving *Parents and Relations*.

1. What are those Characters, which may administer good Ground of Hope, with respect to our *dying Children*.

I shall not here concern my Discourse with those *Children*, that die in

Comfort for Parents,

in their Morning-Infancy, and are snatch't from their *Mothers*, or *Nurses* Breast, by that time they are well come into the World; and consequently, are no more capable of exerting any Acts of Grace, than they are of Reason. The Occasion requires not, and the Time will not allow me to engage in that Subject.

But I shall confine my self to, such *Children*, as have arrived to some Competent years of Understanding, and so are in a Capacity of leaving some Intimations of the early Impressions of *Divine Grace* upon their Hearts, altho' cut off in their Early Blooming days.

Yet in our Management hereof, it becomes us to exercise all humble Sobriety, it being attended with some difficulty, to state aright the first Sproutings of *Divine Grace* in Adult Persons,

Persons,

Comfort for Parents,

11

Persons, and much more in *Young Children*.

We shall therefore make an *Adventure*, only so far, as the *Line of Scripture*, without offering any Violence to it, will conduct us, and leave the more Intricate Secrets of *Divine Operation*, to him that best understands them, even to God himself: Who can discern *Grace* in those *Minuter Workings*, which lie beyond the Reach of our Observation.

To come to Particulars:

There are these timely Intimations of Goodness in *Children*, which may minister good Grounds of *Hope*, with respect to their *latter End*.

1. A Teachable Disposition in the Things of God. As it is the unquestionable Duty of *Parents* to teach their *Children* betimes, and prudently to instil *Divine Truths* into their
Minds,

Comfort for Parents,

Minds, as soon as they are capable of learning ; so it is a very *hopeful* Indication in *Children*, when they are Teachable in *Divine things*, and chearfully receptive of *Spiritual Instructions* in their tender Years. *Whom shall I teach Knowledge, says God, whom shall I make to understand Doctrine? Them that are weaned* Isa. 28.9. *from the Milk, and drawn from the Breasts.* I know, the Words are designedly a very cutting Rebuke to the Unteachable *Jews*; intimating, that a weaned Child was as teachable as they: But withal, we may make this Observation from them, That when *Children* are so early receptive of Gracious Instructions, it is an Argument, That God is at work with them, as their Sovereign Teacher.

Comfort for Parents,

13

To hear *Children* studiously In-
quisitive into Spiritual things, and
asking good Questions about Seri-
ous and Heavenly Matters: To see
them leaning their Heads, and lend-
ing their Ears, earnestly to listen to
Discourses about Soul-affairs, and
things of everlasting Moment; what
a Comfortable Prospect must it af-
ford! And as it cannot but be very
Affecting to the Hearts of concerned
Parents; so it can be esteem'd no
less than an hopeful Intimation in
those tender Plants: That God is
dealing with their Hearts in their
Morning-years, tho' in a way and
manner undiscernable to us.

Who is it that forms the Heart,
which by Nature is Crooked and
Perverse, into this Spiritual Docile-
ness; but he who has all Hearts in *Prov.*
his Hand, and can mould them, *21. 1.*
when

Comfort for Parents,

when and how his Sovereign Goodness pleases? *Children's Hearts in their Natural State, are lockt up against Divine things, as well as other Men's: And who is it, that opens the Lock so early, but he that has the Key of 'David, and opens where none can shut, and shuts where none can open.*

Rev. 3. 7.

In a word, A Teachable Mind, in an Age of Life, that's oftentimes the most untoward and Indocible, implies an Heart, touch'd with the Finger of Heaven; And where God has his Hand upon the Spring so soon, it cannot but suggest a good Hope (through Grace) unto Thoughtful Parents.

2. An Affectionate Respect to the Holy Scriptures, is another early Intimation of an *hopeful* Import. It's recorded as one of the Morning-Bloomings

Bloomings of Divine Grace in a young Timothy, That from a Child ^{2 Tim.} he was acquainted with the Scriptures. ^{3. 15.}

His early Acquaintance with them implies his early Affection to them. He was such an early Proficient in them, because he had an early Desire unto them, and delight in them: which can be attributed to no other than a Divine Original.

When Children therefore express an early Respect to the Holy Bible, and love frequently to converse with those Blessed Oracles; when they take pleasure in Reading them themselves, and in hearing others Read them; when they make a particular Remark upon signal Passages, and inquire into the Meaning of them, and lay them up as a choice Treasure in their Hearts; when they love to Read such Passages over
and

Comfort for Parents,

and over again, and to be telling of them, as if their Hearts were greatly affected with them, and sucked some Vertue and Sweetness from them; what Construction can all this admit of, but as an *hopeful* hint from *Heaven*, of some Gracious Beginnings in those tender Years.

Is it not an Intimation, That the same *Spirit of Grace and Truth*, that indited the *Scriptures*, has begun to draw some Lineaments of those *Blessed Truths* upon such *Childrens Hearts*? When the *Heart* is much in the *Bible*, it's an Argument, there's something of the *Bible* in the *Heart*: There's something within answering to the *Truths* without, which gives them such a pleasant Taste and Relish to the *Soul*.

There's

There's some Minims of the Law writ in the Heart, though the Characters as yet be but very small, and scarce discernable. *Heb. 8. 10, 11.*

This also may afford a very Supporting Foundation of Hope, to Pious Parents.

3. A Towardly Inclination to Religious Duties, is another Token of an encouraging Nature. What a doleful Sight is it, and worthy of the most compassionate Resentments, to observe the wretched Unkindness of some Children to Religious Exercises! Do but compare them then, with what they are at other times; and they are never more forward, or more prone to Sleepiness, than at such Seasons. How apparently do their Spirits either sink or fall, or grow cross and sour, upon the Management of any Holy Duty?

Comfort for Parents,

ty? Thereby manifesting their secret Disrelish of, and prevailing Averseness, unto things of a Spiritual Heavenly Character.

But on the contrary, when Children evidence a pleasant Towardness to the Holy ways of God; when they manifest a dear Affection to Prayer, and reading good Books, and Religious Discourse, as performed and managed by others; and when they frame themselves to these things, in what Manner and Measure their short Capacity will admit; making up in the Will wherein they come short in the Work: This is also a very Amiable, Hopeful Symptom.

It's left as a Mark of Honour upon young *Josiah*, That when he was but Eight Years old, he walked in the ways of his Father David, to do that

which

Comfort for Parents,

19

which was Right in the Sight of the ² Kin.
Lord. 22. 1, 2.

What a lovely Discovery was it of an Immortal Seed, dropt into the Heart, when it thus began to sprout above Ground! How delightful were such early and choice Beginnings! The Power of *Divine Grace* must be at work betimes, where the Effects were so Early and Signal.

Well, It ministers no less matter, both of *Delight* and *Hope*, to see our *Children* beginning to savour the things of God, and to disrelish their *Childish Vanities*, in the timely Spring of their Day. And it cannot but bespeak a new *Divine Palat*, formed in the Soul, to which the Vanities of Youth are so unsavoury, and the Exercises of Heaven so Grateful and Pleasant.

Comfort for Parents,

4. A Thoughtful Concernment about an Eternal State, is another hopeful Indication of early Goodness. Childhood is a Time of Life, that ordinarily runs so much into Froth and Vanity, that it seldom admits of any serious Consideration. How difficult is it to fasten a serious Thought upon *Children*, either of their Duty or Danger, either of their *Present State*, or *Future Doom*! Their Vain Minds are possess'd with their Childish Trifles, that there's no Entertainment for Thoughts, or Fears, or Cares of an higher Nature: They are so charmed by the present Allurements of Time, that they know not how to apply their Minds to the more solemn Concerns of Eternity: And therefore, where any Thoughtfulness appears of this kind, it is the more remarkable.

For

Ecclef.
II, 10:

Comfort for Parents,

21

For Children to be possess'd with an Awful Sense of an Eternal State; to hear them inquiring, *What they shall do to be saved*; to see them concerned about *Death* and *Judgment*, and *Heaven* and *Hell*, must be much more than the same things in grown Persons; It's the more observable in them, by how much it's the more rare, and more contrary to the Temper of that Foolish Age. It's rare to have a Child's Mind composed to any thing, and much more to things that lie so remote from Sense and Fancy, which are their chief Governing Principles.

Whence then must these Thoughts have their Original? To what Spring must they be ascribed? Certainly to no other, than the secret Operation of *Heaven*. Children do not use to look into their Graves, or take a

Comfort for Parents,

Prospect of Eternity, but when the Finger of the Almighty powerfully directs them thither: They do not use to entertain themselves with Anxieties about another World, or what will be their future State therein, but when such Thoughts are dropt from above. And how seldom do such Thoughts abide, but when they are rivetted by the same Hand that made the first Impression?

When therefore Thoughts of this Nature take up such early Possession in the Minds and Hearts of *Children*, it is a Token of very comfortable Signification.

5. A real Desire after an Interest in Christ, is another Intimation, that affords a good Ground of refreshing *Hope*. What an Encouraging Presage does it suggest, to hear *Children* timely inquisitive after the Blessed

Blessed Jesus; asking, *who and what is he, and of what use to the Souls of Sinners*. And upon Intelligence received, to be mighty solicitous and concerned about an Interest in his Grace and Mercy! Our blessed Saviour himself, who was no Stranger to the early Appearances of Divine Grace, lays it down as a fundamental Maxim: *This is Life Eternal, to know the only God, and Jesus Christ, Joh. 17. whom he hath sent*: It's Eternal Life 3. in the Seed, though not in the Flower; in the Beginnings, though not in the Perfection of it. The first Buddings of Spiritual, and consequently of Eternal Life, are frequently couched in Pleasing Inclinations, to hear of this Incomparable Person, and in secret Desires to have a Part and Lot in him.

Comfort for Parents,

And this argues both some Con-
 viction of a lost State by Nature,
 and also so the Spiritual Acquaintance
 with the Nature, Uses, and Ends of
 Jesus Christ, as the great Contri-
 vance of *Heaven*, for saving Perish-
 ing Souls. Why do such Souls e-

steem it their concern to look after
 a Saviour, but that they are in some
 measure sensible of their guilty, un-
 done Condition, by reason of Sin?

And why do they desire to be inte-
 rested, and wrapt up in the Mercies
 of a Gracious Jesus, but that they
 have had some Beam of *Divine Light*
 breaking into their Minds, whereby
 to understand him, as the great Pro-
 pitiation, ordained of the Father
 for Guilty Sinners?

You must allow for the Incapaci-
 ty of *Children*, in not coming to that
 distinct Acquaintance with Christ,

which maturer Years may arrive unto: But it is a singular Foundation of *Hope*, when they know so far of themselves, as to be afraid of dying in a Natural State; and so far of Jesus Christ, as to breathe out their Hearts in an Affectionate Concernment for a Portion in him, as the only *Saviour of dying Souls*: And more may be wrapt up in a Sigh, a Groan, a Word, a Tear of theirs to this purpose, than we are aware of.

6. A tender Fearfulness of known Sin, is another hopeful Testimony of early Goodness. We must indeed make allowance for the unballasted Temper of Childish Years, which cannot be expected to be altogether free from the Vanities and Follies of that Age: But when *Children* are under powerful Impressions

Comfort for Parents,

sions of Fear of doing any thing, which they are convinced to be downright Sin; and this not so much from a Servile Awe of the Rod, as from an ingenuous Tenderness of Heart; it cannot but suggest a good *Hope*, notwithstanding some Childish Follies, that they may be incident to.

Children cannot be supposed to have that explicate and extensive Knowledge of Sin, that riper Years may attain unto. But what they understand to be Sin, they are sensible, it's offensive to God, and displeasing to their Godly Parents, as well as Damning to their own Souls; and from all these Considerations are possessed with an Awful Fear of doing amiss: Who can esteem this any other than a *Divine Spark*, struck from Heaven into their Hearts, while yet in their tender Minority.

Comfort for Parents,

27

How fearful have some *Children* been in Lying (tho' an Iniquity too commonly incident to that Age) of taking the Name of God in vain, of profaning the Sabbath, or bearing apart in the wicked Excesses, that other *Children* run into? How conscientious have some been to reprove their Fellows, that have been involved in these and such like Vices, and that to the Admiration of such as have observed them! How careful have some been to avoid the Company of those that could not be reclaimed from their early Prophaness? They have had no mind to Play, or Converse, or keep Company with such, tho' under many Temptations thereunto: What Construction can be made of this early Tenderness, but that it is some line or stroke of the *New Creature*, drawn in the Heart of

Comfort for Parents.

of such young ones; which may justly encourage *Parents* to entertain a *Comfortable Hope* concerning them.

2 *Kim.*
22: 19:

It's observed, as a Character of a Gracious Import in the young King *Josiah*, *That his Heart was tender*, When Conscience is so early impressed with the Sense of Sin and Duty; it is a good Sign. It's taken notice of, as an early Appearance of Goodness in this young Prince, and it is the like in others, where-ever it is found, *Being a Branch of that Fear, which God hath promised to put into the Hearts of his own People.*

Jer. 32:
40.

7. An Obediential Regard unto *Parents*, is another Argument for Good. As it is a frequently-repeated Charge upon *Children*, *To obey Parents in the Lord*; so it is a very Promising Intimation, when they are early affected with the Conscience

Eph. 6. 1:
Col. 3:
20:

Comfort for Parents,

29

science of their Duty in this particular.

Disobedient *Children*, as they are the Grief and Heart-break of their *Parents* for the present, so they generally give but a very poor Prospect of *Hope* for the future, especially when their Disobedience is attended with Contempt and Obstinacy. Accordingly it is very observable, that among the Persons, whom the Children of *Israel* were to pronounce Accursed, upon *Mount-Ebal*, Contemptuous, Undutiful Children are set, almost in the very Front of the Black Catalogue. Next to the Idolater, that Maketh and Worshippeth any Graven or Molten Image, is He that setteth Light by his Father and Mother. *Deut. 27: 16.* And what blacker Mark of Infamy and Hopelesness can be put upon any Persons, than to be set in the Fore-front

Comfort for Parents,

front of such, as the Curse of *Heaven* is upon? To bear any Place in that miserable *Beadroll*, is sad enough: But to be the very second Rank of the Accursed Crew, bespeaks the Case to be particularly dreadful and discouraging.

But on the contrary, dutiful, obedient *Children*, as they are the Joy and Crown of their Parents, while they live, so they give very good Ground of *Hope*, when they come to die; *For they are the Children of Promise*: And if they have not the Promise made good to them in a long Life upon Earth; it cannot but be comfortably hoped, that a Gracious and Faithful God will fulfil it in that which is better, even Life everlasting in Heaven. I know the External Acts of Obedience may proceed from different Springs or Principles,

Comfort for Parents

31

ciples, which may often vary the case: A Child may yield outward Obedience from Fear, as well as from Love. The dread of the Rod may overawe them, when Love, and the Sense of Duty does not incline them; and in that case we cannot make so hopeful a Conclusion: But when a Child's Obedience evidently springs from an Obediential Disposition; when it is influenced not so much by a slavish awful Fear, as by Principles of Conscience, Love and Reverence; Love and Reverence to Parents, and Conscience to the Command of God; it cannot but be reckon'd a very encouraging Symptom. It's recorded to the Honour of our blessed Saviour, *That he was Subject to his Parents.* Tho' the Advancement of his Humane Nature into the Person of the Son of God, advanced him above any

Comfort for Parents,

any Obligations of that kind, yet to testify how natural, how amiable, how becoming Obedience to *Parents* is, himself yielded all the Subjection and Obedience that could be expected from the Relation. He was Subject, that was Lord over all: to leave a blessed Example to *Children* to be, and do likewise: And it cannot but be esteemed an Hopeful sign, to be conformable to so good a Pattern. It's a part of the Image of the blessed Son of God, to which

Rom. 8. 29. all the *Children of God* are predestinated to be conformed: And any Branch of Conformity to that Image cannot but afford a good Hope concerning those in whom it is found.

Do you see then, *Children* giving all becoming Proofs of their inward Acknowledgment of, and Veneration for their *Parents*? Do you sedulously

them

Comfort for Parents,

33

them careful to please, and fearful to offend and grieve them? When other *Children* are Proud and Stomachful, and Self-will'd; impatient either of Advice or Reproof; Do you see these listening to their *Parent's* Exhortations, and melting under their Reproofs? When others make no matter of disobeying and offending, and provoking their *Parents*; Do you see these afflicted and grieved at themselves for grieving theirs? When the Obedience of others lasts no longer, than while their *Parents* Eye is over them; Do you see these bear a tender respect to their *Parents* Pleasure and Favour, as well from under, as while they are under their *Parents* Eye? In a word, Do you see them Fearful of, or Penitent for any thing, that looks like Undutifulness? Such *Children*

D cannot

but be lookt on, as leaving a good *Testimony* behind them, tho' snatcht away in their Morning-age.

8. A particular Love to good People, is another hopeful Appearance in *Children*. That Love to the Saints is made an evidence of *Grace* in Adult Persons, is so plain in *Scripture*, that nothing can be plainer. Particularly, it's the Mark mainly insisted upon by the Beloved Disciple, *John*; whose own Heart being much affected with Love to God, and the *Brethren*, he makes this a Principal Tryal, with respect to others. I need not point to all the places that occur in his Epistle to this purpose, That one is enough. *We know, that we are passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren.* Observe, he lays it down, not meerly as a probable, but

1 *Joh.*
3. 14.

Comfort for Parents,

35

as a Demonstrative Argument. We know, that is, with an *Holy Confidence* and *Assurance*, that we are passed from *Death* unto *Life*, from a *State of Sin*, unto a *State of Grace*, because we love the *Brethren*; that is, the *Children of God*, as such, or under that *Consideration* and *Character*. And, as this is a *Character* so express in *Scripture*, so in *Experience* it has been so singularly useful, that it has supported the *Spirits*, and quieted the *Fears* of many doubting *Souls*, when all their other *Graces*, not being so perceptible in their *Operations*, have been able to afford them little or no *Relief*. Now, if it be an *Argument* of such *Evidence* in grown *Persons*, why may we not allow it the like *evidentialness*, with respect to *Children*?

Comfort for Parents,

It's true, Love may be caused by such Motives, as may prove too weak a Foundation to build upon in this case; as when it proceeds from nearness of *Natural Affinity*, or from a sweetness of Temper and Conversation, or such like common Endearments. We may love good People, but not as such, but either as related to us in the Bonds of Nature, or as endeared to us, by their sweet and innocent, and obliging Company and Converse. Now this is but a Natural Humane Love; not that *Divine* and *Spiritual* Affection, which can yield any Conclusion, as to the good Estate, either of Elder or Younger Persons. But is it Love to a *Disciple of Christ*, as a *Disciple*; Love to a good Man, as Good; a Love founded, not in *Carnal* Considerations, but *Spiritual* Attractives;

Love

Love to them, because of their Goodness, and as bearing the Characters of *Heaven*? I should not doubt, under these qualifications, to pronounce it a clear Argument of a *Divine*, and *Heaven-born* Principle, where-ever it is found. Love to the *Image* bespeaks Love to the *Original*; Love to *Saints*, as such, argues Love to the *God of Saints*, whose Signature and Superscription they bear: It's Love to Goodness, as Goodness, which argues that they have something of it in themselves; it's Love to the *Divine Nature*, as *Divine*, and from *Heaven*; and consequently cannot but import some Lines of the same Nature, in the Person who loves.

Now, what remarkable Appearances have there been of this Gracious Affection in some *Children*!

Comfort for Parents,

Luk. 1.
41.

Psal. 16.
3.

1 Job.
5. 1.

What pleasing Motions of Respect have been stirr'd up in their Breasts, upon the Sight of good People! *as the Babe sprung for joy in Elizabeth's Womb, at the Salutation of the Mother of our Lord.* How glad have they been to enjoy their Company, and to hear them discourse of God, and Christ, and Heaven! What a sensible Pleasure have they taken, both in their Persons and Conversation! That we may say of them, as the Holy Psalmist once said of Himself, *They hath been the Persons, in whom have been their principal and chief Delight.* Now what Judgment can be made of all this, but that surely they love him that begat, who love those so dearly that are Begotten of Him?

There's at

There's a certain Instinct that attends *Grace*, as well as *Nature* : And as *Nature* will begin early to express it self in a tender Affection towards all the *Children* of the same *Father* ; so when there is the like early Affection towards the *Children* of our *Heavenly Father*, it is an Argument, there's something of that divine Instinct, which attends the new *Nature*.

It's a Character of Renown left upon *Abijah*, the Son of *Jeroboam*, That there was found in him some good thing towards the Lord God of ^{I Kin.} ^{14. 13.} *Israel* : And this good thing is thought by some, to be the secret Countenance and Respect, that he shewed to those good People, that could not comply with his Father's Idolatry, which he had set up at *Dan* and *Bethel*.

Comfort for Parents,

Love to the People of God is Love to God himself at the second Hand: And so God himself tells you, that he will esteem it at the great Day.

Matth.

25. 40.

Inasmuch as you have done it to One of these, you have done it unto me. And if it will be so honourably owned in grown Persons, it will surely be accepted and owned with no less Honour in Children.

9. A delightful Appetite to the Food of Life, is another encouraging Symptom in Children. What an Early Desire has appeared in some little Ones to the Word and Ordinances of Christ! Nothing has pleased them better, than to watch daily at Wisdom's Gates, and to wait at the Posts of her Doors, where the Bread of Life uses to be distributed amongst hungry Souls: And what a Character the Scripture puts upon such, is plain, *Blessed are they.*

Prov. 8.

14.

What

Comfort for Parents,

41

What an high Value have some *Children* set upon Sermons! How desirous have they been of all Opportunities of that Nature! How ready to embrace them, when at any time offered, and unwilling to let one such Season slip, as if they esteem'd it the loss of a *Spiritual Meal-time*! With what listening Ears, and earnest Looks have they been observed to sit under the Drop-pings of the Sanctuary, as if they were as greedy of the Breast of the Word, as the hungry Child is of the Mother's Breast! How sweet and grateful have the glad Tydings of Salvation been to their tender Hearts; *and with what Delight have they sate under the Shakings of the Tree of Life*, as might easily be discerned by their Trickling Eyes, or stedfast Looks, and pleasing Countenance.

Now,

Comfort for Parents,

Now, what does all this import, where it is found, but a Principle, suitable to the Food, which it is carried out unto? You may know every Creature by its proper Food, which it most inclines unto, and delights in; and the new Creature is equally discernible by its Food. The New-born Infant no sooner almost makes its Appearance in the World, than it discovers a natural Instinct, leading it to the Mother's Breast: And may not the Spiritually-new-born Soul be discovered by the like Inclination to the sincere Milk of the *Word*? So the *Apostle* plainly suggests.

Pa. 2.2.

What is it that hungers and desires, and carries the Soul out after the *Heavenly Manna*? What is it that the *Milk and Honey of the Promised Land*, is so accomodate and agree-

agreeable to? Is it any Principle of the old Nature? That cannot be, because the old Nature must have Food suitable to its self, something Carnal and Sensual; *For they that Rom. 8. are in the Flesh, savour only the things 5. of the Flesh.* Therefore it must be some higher and Divine Principle; and consequently no other than that Heaven-born Principle, which is styled the new Nature.

As the Food is, that is most acceptable to the Soul, so is the Inclination; and as the Inclination is, so is the Principle, from whence it flows.

10. Sensible Breathings after more Clearness for Heaven, do also administer a blessed Ground of Hope. That *Children* should have such a Faith and Sense of that invisible State, as earnestly to desire an Interest,

Comfort for Parents,

rest a Part, a Place in those *Heavenly Mansions*, is an Intimation of *Hope*, not to be despised. But when you observe them breathing them out of their Hearts in warm and affectionate Desires, that their Evidences were but clearer, and their Title to Heaven more distinct and legible ! This cannot but minister a still more refreshing Argument of *Hope*.

How sensibly must it move the tender Affections of concerned *Parents*, to hear their *Children* express a Thoughtful Heart about going to Heaven ! But to hear them sweetly and concernedly sigh out, *Oh that my Interest in Christ, and Right to the Heavenly Inheritance, was but more clear and evident, less obscure and cloudy !* This must make a very sensible Addition to *Parents* Comfort and Joy.

Not

Not to be content with a dark and doubtful Interest, but to send up fervent Groans to Heaven for more Evidence and Clearness; not to be satisfied with some languid Hopes, but to aspire after a more lively and confirmed Hope, and yet in the mean time to dread Presumption; not to be content with some imperfect Dawnings of that Glorious Day, but to breathe after clearer Discoveries of the Love and Favour of God, in and through a Saviour: This must certainly be a Frame of Soul, that carries not a little Encouragement in it. It's a very encouraging Symptom in grown Persons, and much more in *Children*.

What was it but the sweet Breath of a Gracious Heart, when the Holy *Psalmist* address'd himself in such a Pathetick Prayer to Heaven;

Remem-

*Psalm 106. Rememebre me, O Lord, with the Fa-
 4: 5: vour of thy People: Oh visit me with
 thy Salvation, that I may see the Good
 of thy Chosen! Two Evidences of a
 Sincere Gracious Soul, are observa-
 ble in the Prayer: First, That no less
 would satisfie his Panting Heart, than
 the Favour that was peculiar to
 God's own People, the good of his
 Chosen: And secondly, that could
 not content him neither, but he
 must have the sensible Refreshing
 Evidence of that Favour.*

Such Heavenly Breathings have
 sometimes appear'd in young ones;
 that nothing could satisfie them but
 some chearing Glimps of the Salva-
 tion of God; and what can be the
 Spring of such Divine Bubblings but
 an Heart season'd with an Heavenly
 Tincture from above? It's an Argu-
 ment, that Christ lies near the Heart,
 when

when the Desires are so strong after Clearness of Interest. *Heaven* must both be understood and valued, where the Soul is so solicitous for a sure and clear Title; and would not only have some *Hope*, but *rejoyce in Hope in the Glory of God.*

II. Willingness to be gone, to be with Christ, is the last Gracious Symptom I shall mention. It's not to be doubted, but Death in its self must be as terrible to *Children*, as to others. The Separation of two such dear Intimates, as Soul and Body, cannot but look with a frightful Aspect upon them, as well as more grown Persons; the utter Extinction of all Worldly Relations, and Earthly Comforts, cannot but be very unwelcome and uneasie to Flesh and Blood: *To be taken from the Land of the Living, and lodged in*

*Isa. 38.
11.*

the

Comfort for Parents,

the Dark and hideous Mansions of the Grave, where they shall see Man no more, with the Inhabitants of the Earth, cannot but make recoil in them, as well as others. And yet it's very remarkable, how welcome this Grim and Melancholy Messenger has been to some young Ones; and how willing have they been to leave the World, and to go to the House, prepared for all Living: tho' they have but just begun to taste the Sweet and Pleasure of the World, and have felt little of the Bitter to wean their Hearts from it; yet how contented have they been to bid it Farewel, with all its Delights and Pleasures, and have entertained Death with a very sweet and resigning Composure of Mind! Now, what could thus reconcile the King of Terrors to them, but the Thoughts
and

Comfort for Parents,

94

and hopes of something beyond the Grave, to recompence the loss of what they leave here? It's an argument of their Faith, that they believe a future State; and that the Happiness thereof, infinitely exceeds all the Felicities of this present state of Time. It's an Evidence they have got, some Peep within the Vail, where they have seen great and wonderful Things, far surpassing all the Enjoyments of this lower Region. It's a demonstration of their Love to, and Valuation of Christ, that they esteem the Fruition of him, more worth than all the World; and are willing to be absent from the Body, that they may be present with the Lord. 2 Cor. 8: It's an argument they have some In-
in God, as their God, they are so
E willing

Comfort for Parents,

willing to go to Him, though it be through such a *Gloomy Passage*. And that they love their *Fathers House*, since the *Messenger* is so welcome, tho' but a frightful One, that's sent to fetch them thither. It's an intimation they know and have felt something of *Heaven*, when they can be so content, to exchange *Things* seen for unseen: the visible, sensible *Comforts* of this *World*, for the invisible *Delights* of *Heaven*.

In a Word, It's an evident *Proof* that *Christ* is their *Life*, their *Joy*, their *Hope*, their *Happiness*, their *Portion*, their *All*, when they can so freely throw off all the *Courtships* of *Flesh* and the *World*, that they may be with their *Exalted Redeemer*, as the best of all. The

Phil. 1:

23:

pale

Comfort for Widows,

31

pale Horse of Death, could not meet with such a welcome and submissive Reception, but that he carries them thither, whither their Hearts are already gone. And when their Hearts are Above, it is a Argument their Treasure is there also. It is not to be expected, that Children should have such clear and explicit Apprehensions, as more mature Christians: But however, when they know so much, as to esteem it a Being with Christ, and upon that account, not only Heaven is truly desirable, but Death is welcome, as the Way thither: It cannot but be reckoned as a very hopeful Presage. And what can suggest more affecting and refreshing Hopes to Mourning Parents, than to see their depart-

ing *Children* thus prefer being with Christ before their Continuance in this Vain and Changeable World?

Thus I have endeavoured to take afflicted *Parents* by the Hand, and to lead them to some of those Cordial-Springs of *Hope*, which may minister good Encouragement as to the good Estate of their *Dying Children*. And tho' it's a rare Happiness to find all these Blessed Symptoms in a sweet Conjunction; yet where there is any of them, it may give some Support and Hope: And the more that appears, the higher may our Hopes advance towards an holy Confidence.

2. I come now to shew,

In what respects these Grounds of Hope in Dying Children, minister Matter of Support and Comfort to their Surviving Parents and Relations.

1. Having such Grounds of Hope, Parents may be satisfied, that their Children are not lost, but laid up. It's a Thought, that oftentimes perplexeth the Minds of tender Parents not a little, what becomes of their dear Children, when they go hence; into what Hands they fall, and whither they are transported and carried: And that which renders the Parting many times more Bitter and Afflictive, is the Perplexity of this. But having the fore-

Comfort for Parents,

mentioned Grounds of Hope, the
 Perplexity is presently removed.
 Your Children, though gone out
 of your Sight and Care, yet they
 are not lost, but safely lodg'd up;
 Not lost among the *Infernal A-*
postate Fiends of Hell, those Rob-
 bers and Murderers of precious
 Souls; but safely laid up amongst
God's Jewels, who will have them
 all forth-coming another Day.
 Not lost in *Satan's Territories* a-
 mong those raging Lyons of Prey,
 but happily conducted to their
Heavenly Father's Bosom, where
 they are laid up in Peace and
 Safety.

Malach.
 3. 17.

Psal. 57.
 4:

As God has stamped the Linea-
 ments of his own Image upon
 them, in True, though not in such
 Large Characters; so will he not
 take

take care of those, whom he has set his own Child's mark upon? Will he lose his Children, whom he hath adopted into the Line of Heaven, and yet his own *Super-
scription* upon, or suffer the Mortal Enemy to rob him of what's so Dear and Precious to him? No, no, they have all the Safety that Infinite Love, in Conjunction with *Job. 10:*
Infinite Power can give them: *28, 29.*
Tho' *Death* have removed them from this Region of Sensible *Sup-
ports* and *Comforts*, yet *Death* has not put an utter end to them. They are not perish'd by the *Re-
moval*, nor relaps'd into their *First nothing*, but still live in the *Divine World*, and another kind of Life, than they liv'd here in this *Vale of Sin and Sorrow.*

Comfort for Parents,

60. Having such Intimations of
Hope, *Parents* may be comfort-
 ed, That their own Loss is their
 dear *Childrens* Gain. We can
 part with our *Children* here, to
 Places and Countries at a remote
 distance, and comfort our selves
 with this, That it is for their Be-
 nefit and Gain, though but a
 poor *Worldly* Gain. And may
 we not more comfortably part
 with them to *Heaven*, where their
 Gain infinitely exceeds any thing
 we can propose here below?

Phil. i.
 21.

You Tender and Sorrowful Pa-
 rents; you lose their Sweet and
 Delightful Company; you lose
 their Charming and Refreshing
 Conversation. And as a Person that
 has been conducted by the Light
 of a Candle in the Night, is the
 more

Comfort for Parents,

57

more sensible of the Darknes, when it is taken away; so it may be, you are the more overclouded with Sorrow, by the Loss of your *Hopeful Children*, after the sweet of your Enjoyment, than if you had never enjoyed them. But do you duely consider what you do? You think you express your dear Love to them, in your Sorrow for parting with them; But should not true Love oblige you, rather to rejoyce in their Gain, than to grieve for your own Loss? Though you are Losers, yet they are infinite Gainers: And should not the Thought of that diffuse a sensible Pleasure into your troubled *Minds*, and reduce them to a Serene Calm?

They

Comfort for Parents,

They exchange Earthly Parents, who it may be have wanted no Tenderness towards them; but it is for an Heavenly Father, who is not only Loving, but pure and perfect Love it self. They bid adieu to their Dear, but imperfect Friends here below; but it is to go to better, and more desirable Friends above, where there is all Perfection and Pleasure, and Harmony. They put off their filthy Garments of sinful Mortality; but it is to be arrayed with shining Robes of Immortality and Glory. They are called from a State of Sin and Sorrow, and Temptation here, but it is to pass into an endless State of perfect Purity and Joy in the Blessed Mansions above. They are

are snatch'd out of your tender and Compassionate Arms; but they are received into the dearer Embraces of a *Glorified Redeemer*. They are taken from your Charge and Care, but they are taken under the immediate Wing and Care of a *Faithful Covenant-keeping God*. Oh Blessed Exchange! Who would not take Comfort at the Thoughts of their *Children* or *Friends*, making such a Glorious and Happy Change!

John 2:2
15:13

3. Having this Hope, Parents may be supported, that they and their *Children* shall meet again with Rejoycing. Though you and they are separated for the present, yet it's not an Everlasting Separation: You shall meet again, not indeed by their Return unto you,

For-

2 Sam.
12. 23.

you, but by your going unto them, as afflicted *David* comforts himself as to his Child: And your Meeting shall be in another manner than now you part. Your parting indeed is sorrowful, and attended with a great deal of Bitterness and Exercise, what by dying Agonies on the one side, and what by cutting Resentments on the other: But the Comfort of your Meeting will infinitely countervail the Sorrow of your parting.

You part in the vile Rags of perishing *Mortality*; but your Meeting will be in the *Royal Robes* of *Immortal Holiness* and *Glory*: You part in Tears and Fears, and Complaints and Sorrows; but you meet again with

Ever-

Everlasting Joy upon your Heads, with all Tears wiped from your Eyes, and with all Fears banish'd from your Hearts; never to sin, never to Sorrow any more. You part, so as to expect to see one another no more in this *Lower Region*; but you shall meet again in the *Cœlestial Regions* above, never to be separated any more, but to enjoy God, and one another in God for ever. You part from one another; Mourning, though bearing your precious Seed; but you shall meet again, Rejoycing, bringing your full Sheaves with you. Oh Triumphant Meeting! How reviving must the Thought of it be! What Mournful Breast is there, whose Soul springs not within him at
the

Comfort for Parents,

the Prospect of such a Meeting?
 Set the Joys of Meeting against
 all the Afflictive Circumstances
 of Parting, and refuse to be com-
 forted, if you can.

Having thus dispatched the Do-
 ctrinal Part, it remains now that
 we make some short Application.

I. Let me address a few words
 to you Mournful Parents; both
 you, who are immediately con-
 cerned in the present occasion, and
 all others in the like case. Your
 Faces are covered with Sadness,
 and your Hearts ready to bleed
 within you, over the Loss of
 your Dear and Hopeful Children:
 But let Consideration govern your
 Passion; and while you are shew-
 ing

Comfort for Parents,

93

ing your Parental Affection in your Mourning, labour to express your Christian Moderation, in carrying your selves like *Mourners of Hope*.

And therefore,

1. Indulge not an unbounded Sorrow: For the same Hand that hath made you to bleed, hath not left you without an *Healing Balm*, seasonably to close up again the gaping Orifice. You need not take on, as those that have no Hope, or as those that have buried their Children and their Hopes both in the same Grave. You may not sit down in your Despondency with Hagar, as if you had no Well of Consolation by you, when the Well is so near you; though your Children be gone, and gone, never to return more, yet God call'd

1 Thess.

4. 13.

Gen: 21:

15, 19.

call'd them not away, till they had left with you some *Blessed Pledges of Hope*, to let you know whither they were a going. Tho' you are never like to see them, nor to hear from them, nor of them any more, till you go where they are, yet they were not suffered to leave you, till they had dropt some sweet Tokens into your Bosom, which may be a sensible Support, till you meet again. And having such Encouragement, does it become you to Mourn, as if the Swelling-Waves knew no Bounds?

There be many that *Die*, who neither carry any good ground of *Hope* with them, nor leave any good ground of *Hope* behind them, to their surviving *Relati-*
ons;

ons. And, indeed, I scarce know a more humbling afflictive Case, that can befall Godly Persons, than when they have the bitter Occasion to mourn over Hopeless Relations, who neither had any Comfort in their own Death, nor left any matter of Comfort behind them. This was probably the wounding Ingredient, that made David so passionate in his Resentments when he had lost his Absalom. ^{2 Sam. 2: 23.} But this is not your Case; though the Cloud that God has drawn over you be Dark, yet its not all Darkness, it has its Bright, as well as its Dark Side. And while the One ministers matter of Sorrow to you, the reviving Beams of the Other, may give you Light and Comfort, in the midst of your Sorrows.

F

2. Bless

Comfort for Parents,

2. Bless God, that hath given you such *Hope*, instead of *Grieving* and *Repining*, for what you have lost. Adore *Divine Goodness* for what you have left you. You have lost a *Child*, but you have a *Legacy* of *Hope* left you, to help you to bear your *Loss*: Be more in Blessing God for the one, than in mourning for the other. It might have been otherwise with you, that you neither might have had *Child* nor *Hope*. But since God has been more gracious to you, take heed of carrying it, as if either you had no sense of *Divine Goodness*, or your *Relation Dyed without Hope*. As there is a *Debt of Tears* owing to your *Hopeful* departed *Children*, so there is a *Debt of Thankfulness* tha

Comfort for Parents,

67

fulness owing to the *God* that made them such. Be not over-liberal in paying the One, while in the mean time you forget the Other. Tho' *God* have taken away the tender *Olive-Plants*, that should have adorned your *Tables*; yet (as good old *Jacob* said in another case) it's enough that you have a *Comfortable Hope*, that they are transplanted to a richer *Table* in their *Father's Kingdom*. They have taken their flight, never to make their *Return* to *Earth* any more: But it's enough that you have *Hope* in their *Latter End*. Bless *God* for, and comfort one another with that *Hope*.

2. Give me leave now to improve this *Point* more generally, to all to whom it may be useful; and that 1. To *Parents*, 2. To *Children*.

F 2

1. Here's

Comfort for Parents,

1. Here's Matter of Exhortation to you Parents, That you would use the utmost care in the Holy Education of your *Children*; that whether they live or die, you may have *Comfort*; if they live, you may have *Comfort* in their Lives; if they die, you may have *Hope* in their Death: Or however, you may have this Support in your own Spirits, that you have discharged your Duty.

As soon therefore as they arrive to a Competent measure of Capacity, take all Opportunities prudently to instil *Divine Truths* into their *Minds*, such as their tender Years are most capable of receiving; that their *Minds*, being so early tinctured with things of *Eternal Moment*, may derive

a

a suitable Impression to their *Hearts*. Take all convenient Seasons to acquaint them, that there is a Great and Glorious, though invisible God, who made all things, and curiously formed them in Secret, and formed an *Immortal Spirit* within them, to know and love, to live unto, and live with Him in an *Everlasting State*. Be telling them, as they are able to bear, how their Natures are depraved and fallen off from their *God and Happiness*; and that thereby they are become *Children of Wrath* by Nature, and obnoxious to the Judgment and Curse of an offended *Majesty*. Acquaint them, with what Condescension to their Capacities you can, what guilty,

Comfort for Parents,

perishing Creatures they came into the World, by reason of Sin; and if it were not for Infinite Goodness, that they might have been tumbled into *Hell*, as soon as ever they drew their *First Breath*. Tell them, that in this miserable *State* they might have lived and died without Remedy, had not Infinite Compassion provided a *Saviour*, to deliver poor Guilty *Souls* from going down to the horrible *Pit*. Inform them (with what plainness and distinctness you can possibly use,) who this *Saviour* is, and what he has done and suffered, and what he is still a doing, in order to the Recovery of lost, undone *Souls*. Tell them, that they, even they must have an Interest in this *Savi-*

our, or they are undone for ever ;
and that the way of coming to an
Interest in Him, is by an Humble
casting themselves upon his *Blood*
and *Grace*, for the Pardon of their
Sins, and the Healing of their
Corrupted Natures.

Such Truths as these, labour
to possess, and season their early
Thoughts withal : Only, in the
doing thereof, use all the Prudence
and Gentleness, and Condescensi-
on you can ; that you neither
overcharge them with too much
at once, nor confound them with
Things that their Capacities can-
not reach unto. And who knows
how this *Divine Leaven* may
(under the Influence of the *Hea-
venly Blessing*) diffuse its powerful
Vertue thro' their *Tender Souls* ?

Comfort for Parents,

2 Kin.
2. 23.

As soon as they begin to talk, learn them to talk in the Language of *Canaan*, and not of *Asbdod*; in the Dialect of *Heaven*, and not of a *Prophane World*; that their early Breath be not corrupted with the rotten Communication of the *Children of Belial*.

Let it be your Pious and Early Care to teach them their *Catechism*, as being the most familiar and methodical way of Instruction; and content not yourselves that they learn it by rote, but labour to convey the Truths therein to their Understandings and Affections. As soon as possible also, learn them to Pray; and in order thereunto Pray with them your Selves, and acquaint them,

them, both what need they have to Pray, and how they must address themselves to God in this Solemn Duty.

Carry them, as soon as you can judge it convenient, to the Publick Worship and Ordinances of the Gospel ; and esteem it a Mercy, that you may carry your Young and your Old with you. Observe them, with what Reverence and Attention they carry themselves, while they are there, and call them to an Account, what they have brought with them, when they come home ; and take Advantage of what they remember, though it be the less, to improve it to further Instruction.

Above

Comfort for Parents,

Above all, inure them to their *Bibles* betimes, and direct them to such Places, as may be most fitted to their weak Capacities; and if in their Reading, any thing offer it self, which may afford special Instruction to them, improve it to that end. And thro' *Divine Goodness*, some Grains of the Immortal Seed may take Root, e're you are aware. In a word: Train them up to all Religious and Divine Exercises, that their tender Years are capable of: And cease not to water all with your *Prayers* and *Tears* for an happy Success.

Would you have your *Children* Comfortable in *Life*, and Hopeful in *Death*; let these be the Particulars of your Serious and
Early

Early Care. And the more effectually to excite you thereunto, let me offer to you the following Considerations.

I. Without this Religious Care of Education, you cannot expect the *Comfort* you desire, neither in their *Life*, nor *Death*. I know, there is nothing more Natural, than for *Parents* to place a great deal of *Hope*, and to promise to *Themselves* large share of *Comfort* from their *Rising Offspring*. When you are pressed down with the Pains, and almost wearied with the Care that's laid out upon them, this sweetens and alleviates all. But seriously consider with your selves, what just Ground have you for such Expectations, without a Conscientious Endeavour

Comfort for Parents,

your to render them such as you would have them, by an Holy Education? Can you expect to attain the End, without a careful use of the means, in order thereunto? Has not the Holy God, the Father of all our Comfort, connected the Means with the End, in this, as well as other Cases? And who dare separate what God has conjoyn'd?

What God may do in a way of Prerogative is one thing; and what you may expect in a way of Ordinary Dispensation is another. God may be Better and Kinder to your *Children*, than your Selves are, and may do that for them which you take no Care about. But what Warrant have you to expect this, while you
are

Comfort for Parents,

77

are negligent in your Duty ?
Though God promised to do
great Things for Abraham, his
Friend, and for his Posterity, yet
he tells you, That in order there-
unto he knew, *that Abraham would*
command his Children and his Gen: 18.
Houſhold to keep the way of the 19:
Lord. Intimating thereby, that
he was not to expect the Comfort,
without the Discharge of the Du-
ty; no more can you. It's in a
way of diligent Performance of
your Part, and in an humble De-
pendance upon God for doing his
Part, that you have any Founda-
tion for Hope; that they shall be
Comforts, not Croſſes to you.

It's true, it's the Royal Prero-
gative of a Gracious God, to give
them that Grace, whereby they
must

must be rendred comfortable, whether in *Life* or *Death*: But tho' the *Grace* is his, the *Duty* is yours, and it's by the Instrumentality of a *Gracious Education*, that he oftentimes conveys that *Immortal Seed* to the *Soul*; which though it may lie hid under the Clods for a time, yet in due Season appears above Ground: Though God sows the *Seed*, you may Act in a Holy Subserviency, in Cultivating the Ground, in order to a *Blessed Crop*.

2. Without this holy Care of *Education*, you do not answer the Charge of *Heaven*, that's incumbent on you. If you are *Religious Parents*, your Consciences cannot but be affected with the Command of God, as well as your
Hearts

Hearts influenced with the Consideration of *Comfort*. Add this therefore to the former, and labour to impress your *Spirits* with the Ponderous Thoughts thereof; your *Children* are not so much yours as God's; they are not so much born unto You, as to the Blessed God. *And as they are born unto him, so they are given in charge to you, to train and bring up for him.* *Ezek. 16. 20.*
Train up a Child in the way that he should go, &c. Ye Fathers, bring up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. *Prov. 22. 2. Eph. 6. 4.*

What can be more express? Your Children are not meer Gifts, but a signal Trust: You may not do with them, nor carry towards them as you please; but the Charge of *Heaven* is upon You to Educate
 and

and breed them up for the God that gave them. And how will you answer your Neglect to the Great and Sovereign Law-giver, if you live either in the Wilful or Careless Violation of so Solemn a Charge? Or, with what Reason can You expect *Comfort*, either in their Enjoyment, or in their Removal, if You be guilty of a provoking Disobedience to so plain a Command? Can God be pleased with such *Parents*, or can You expect that He should make Your *Children* pleasing unto you?

3. Without this Pious Care of Education, you do not answer your Care for them in other Particulars: You are careful to Feed and Cloath them, without need-
ing

ing any Arguments to press you thereunto. You can take Advantage of their *First capacity*, to learn them some External Civilities, and to form their flexible Years into some Decency of Carriage, which you call good Manners. You are careful to provide, not only for their present, but for their future Livelihood, and to breed them up to some way of Comfortable Subsistence in the World, as your Abilities, and their Capacity will admit. And while all this Care is bestowed upon the Outward Man, should there not be a proportionable Concern for the better part? Should the One ingross all, and the Other be neglected as a Matter of no great Moment? Our *Saviour's* Rule

Matth.
6. 36.

is ; Seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof, and all other things shall be added unto you. Seek first for the Kingdom of God ; and if for your selves, then for your Children.

Which should challenge the highest Care, but the best Part, whether of our selves, or Children? And, whether is the better ; the External, Mortal part, or the Internal Immortal Spirit ? Whether is the more Valuable ; their Present, Temporary Being ? If Eternity be of more Importance than Time, then surely their Eternal State should be the largest Sharer in your Thoughts and Cares ; or how will you answer the Inequality ? You would have them do well in this World, that

is

is the Motive of all the Thought and Pains, and Expence, which you bestow upon their Outward Being. And would you not have them to do well in the *Eternal World*? Why then does not your Care for that bear some Proportion to your Concern for the other? You esteem it a Natural, and a most Becoming Office of Parental Affection, to study and endeavour their Temporal Welfare: And so it is. But should not Your Love travel in more earnest Endeavours and Agonies for that which is infinitely Better; the Everlasting Happiness of their *Immortal Souls*? Whether should be Dearer to you, the *Cabinet* or the *Jewel*? The Perishing Earthly
G 2 Taber-

Comfort for Parents

2 Sam. 6. 56.

Tabernacle, or the **inestimably precious Soul**? How then will you answer it, either to your own Conscience, or to the **Supreme Judge**, if you are more **Liberal** in your Care about the **Worke**, than the **Better part**? **4.** Without a **Conscientious** Care of Education, your Affliction will be doubled in their **Miscarriage**. As they are so **Near and Dear** unto you, you cannot but be deeply afflicted, if either they should prove **Crosses in Life**, or should be **snatch'd away** in their **Sins** by a **Premature Death**. But what a cutting **Addition** will it be to your Affliction, if you have **Reason** to accuse your selves, as being **Accessory** to their **Ruin** by your **Sinful negligence**. It will be

Grief

Grief enough, to think that you
have nourished and brought up
Children for the Destroyer. But
it will be a far more sensible Grief,
when you are forced to take the
Guilt of their undoing very much
upon your selves, for want of a
due Performance of your Duty
to them. It cannot but go very
near your Hearts, that those, who
are as it were Limbs, and Pieces
of your selves, should become a
Prey to the cruel Murderer;
but it must break your Hearts to
the very Dust, when by your
own Neglect you have as it were
murdered them with your own
Hands; or at least have not done
what in you lay to save them
from the Murderer's Hands. That
you have neither Comfort in their

Comfort for Parents,

Life, nor *Hope* in their Death, will be Sorrow and Bitterness enough: But when your own Consciences fall upon you with the cutting Reflection, that all this is but the sad Fruit of your own Remissness and Negligence, how will you be able to bear a Charge of so wounding a Nature?

If they should prove uncomfortable or unhopeful, after the Conscientious Discharge of your Duty, though your Affliction will be great, yet you will have one Support at least under your Burden: You may comfort yourselves, that you have discharged your Duty; and it is not thro' your Default, that they Perish; and though they miss of the Benefit of your Cares, and Prayers, and

and Endeavours, yet the Blessing *Psal. 35:*
may return in your own Bosom; ^{13.}

but if you contribute to their Mis-
carriage, by your neglecting the
appointed Means of Heaven, for
the Prevention thereof, your Bur-
den may weigh heavier, than you
will be able to bear. Why might
not this be one imbittering Ingredi-
ent in *Dauids* Sorrow, that might
cause him to take on so heavily
at the Death of his Son *Absalom*? ^{2 Sam.}

Possibly he might be under some
bitter Reflections of his own Fai-
lure in his Duty; which might
make the Stroke pierce so deep:
And it will be no less an
Aggravation of your Bitterness, if
it should prove your case. ^{18. 33.}

Comfort for Parents,

But thus much may serve to
Parents, who would have Hope
in their Children.

2. I come now to direct my
self in a few Words to You
Children.

You have heard how much
your Parents Comfort is bound up
in the Proof of your Blooming
Years; labour therefore after that
which may afford the most so-
lid Consolation, both to Your
selves and them, whether in Life
or Death. Next, to their own
Souls, you are the great Object
of your Parent's Cares and Fears;
of their Prayers and Thoughts of
Heart: And if God should see
meet

meet to pluck you away in the Bud;
you had need to make your Death
as comfortable, both to your selves,
and your concerned Parents, as
you can. It will be Sorrow e-
nough to them, to part with you,
when they should come to enjoy
the sweetest and most comforta-
ble part of your Life: You had
need to make it as easie as you
can, by leaving them some *Graci-
ous Pledge of Hope* behind you.

And that you may do so, I
cannot give you more pro-
per Advice than now in your Mor-
ning-years to look after the best
things, *even the things that accom-* Heb. 6. 9.
pany Salvation. I suppose you to
be capable of apprehending and
enquiring into things of this Na-
ture: Know therefore, that you,
as

Comfort for Parents,

as little and young as you are, have a Real and Everlasting Concern in such things, as well as others: And it's not too soon for you to take your selves to be concerned about them. Now, to enquire after God, and to mind the things of your Peace, is God's Call to you, as well as more grown Persons. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy Youth.* Observe the little Word, *now*; it takes date from the Morning-Twilight of your Day, as soon as your Rational Powers peep forth into Competent Exercise: And from the time it takes date, it admits of no delay. Now remember: Now delay not; for you cannot assure your selves of another Moment. Say not,
It

Eccles.
12. 1.

Comfort to Parents

21

It will be time enough to Morrow;
for to Morrow, as short a time as
it seems to be, you know not, but
you may be under the Arrest of
Death, and ready to be shut up
in your silent Grave, where there
is no Wisdom nor Knowledge. Say Eccles. 9.
not, Such work will be more proper^{10.}
for Riper Years: For who can
give you Assurance, that you
shall live to more Maturity?
Death comes not by Order of
Nature, but according to the
Divine Commission. As Young
and Sprightly as you are, and as
many Days as you seem to have
before you, yet for ought you
know, your Glafs may be running
out its last Sand: And this may
be the last Month, or Week, or
Day, that you have to live. As
young

Comfort to Parents,

young as you are gone to the cold Mansions in the Grave; and what Security have you from the fatal Stroke, more than they? Go into the Shops, and see if there be no Coffins of your size: Go into the Church-yard, and see if there be no Graves of your Length. If there be, as your own Eyes will soon convince you, consider with yourselves, that a few Moments may bring it to your Turn. And then, how comfortable will it be, both to your selves and Friends, that you have so Early secured your Everlasting Interest! Your Parents will be better able to part with you, when your Early Goodness gives them Hopes, that you are going to a better, an Infinitely better Father.

And

And you your selves will more
Comfortably shoot the Dismal
Gulph, when you have Reason
to believe, that you have commit-
ted your Souls into those Blessed
Hands, that will land them safe
on the other side.

In order hereunto, let me re-
commend unto you a few seasonable
Instructions, and beg of you to
put them into serious and speedy
practice.

Begin to entertain your Ear-
ly Thoughts with Soul-Matters:—
God having Mercifully preserved
you beyond the Incapacity of your
Infant-Age; and having brought
you to some Competency of Un-
derstanding; it's time for you to

apply your serious Thoughts to things of the most concernful Moment. And what can be of more Indispensable Moment, than the Everlasting Concerns of your precious Souls? It's not too soon for you to know, that you have *Immortal Souls* in your Bosoms, which though Invisible to an Eye of Sense, yet are not only Real, but the most Precious and Valuable Part of your selves: It's not too early for you to understand and consider, that these *Spiritual Beings* are formed on purpose for an Everlasting State; and that when the *Dreggy Carcasses* are thrown to the Dust, yet these *Immortal Spirits* survive to pass into the *Invisible World*, there to be the Subjects of unexpressible Happiness,

1999

or

or Misery for ever. It's not improper nor impertinent for you to lay to Heart, that Eternity must be of greater Importance than Time; and that the State, which must last for ever, is of more absolute necessity, than that which is but like to last for a few Days.

Let it be your endeavour therefore, to apply your Early Thoughts to such things as these; instead of suffering them to be carried away with those Vanities, which too ordinarily get the start of more serious Matters. It's impossible for you to be truly Religious, till you begin to be serious Thinkers, as you may see in the Instance of the *Prodigal Son*. And what more meet, more proper, more con-

concerning, to entertain Your first Thoughts with, than what we are, and what will become of us for ever? What are we? *Brutes*, that have only a *Life of Sense*; or, *Reasonable*, *Understanding* *Creatures*? What will become of us? Shall we perish with the *Beasts*, and there be end of us, or shall we live beyond the *Grave*? And, if we must survive the *Grave*, what will be Our Condition in that *Future State*?

Such Thoughts as these will neither be unbecoming, nor unnecessary, as Young as you are. And your Thoughts, by thus looking Inwards, will by a necessary Connexion, be led to look Upwards. By thinking of your selves, you will be led

to

to think and consider of God;
as the *Author* of your *Beings*,
as the great *Object* of your
Duty, as the *Awful Judge*, be-
fore whom you must stand with-
in a few *Days*; and as the
Blessed Center, where alone you
can expect *Rest* and *Happiness*.

How profitably, how sweetly
may your *Thoughts* run up-
on these *Subjects*! And how re-
freshing will it be to your Ex-
pecting *Parents*, to observe, that
you are *Thoughtful* about such
Matters?

2. Labour to possess your
Hearts with the *Early Conviction*
of your *Miserable State* by
Nature. As innocent as you may
suppose your selves to be, yet be
H wil-

willing to know, That by Nature
Eph. 2.3. you are Children of Wrath, as
 well as the worst of Sinners, and
 that you came into the World
 with that Corruption and De-
 filement of Nature, which renders
Rom. 3. you Guilty before God. Be willing
19. to be convinced, that you are
 so many undone, perishing Souls,
 whom God is angry with every
 day, and who are obnoxious to
 his Righteous Judgment, every
Job. 3. moment, till a Change of State
36. have past upon you.

Look within you, and see what
 wretched depraved Creatures Sin
 hath made you: Full of little,
 but Rebellion and Enmity against
 God, and Serious Goodness. Look
 above you, and see the Flaming
 Sword of Offended Justice, wait-
 ing

ing only for a *Divine Commissi-*
on, to dislodge your Trembling
Souls out of your Bodies, and to
send you down to the *Chambers*
of Death. Look before you, and
behold the *Burning Lake of In-*
finite Wrath, opening her Mouth
to receive you into *Unquench-*
able Flames. And having got a
sight of your Danger and Mife-
ry, argue the Case with your
own Souls: Is this a Condition
to be rested or lingred in? Is
this a State to be careless, or un-
concerned about? *Who can dwell*
with Consuming Fire? Who can
inhabit with Everlasting Burnings?
Why art thou at ease, O my
Soul? Why art thou secure with-
in me? Thy case is thus Dreadful
and Dangerous.

Comfort for Parents,

Sequester some of the Time, which is too often spent in Vanity, to entertain your Minds with such Considerations and Expostulations, as these; and put not off the matter with a few slight Thoughts, that almost perish in the Thinking; but labour to press and follow the Conviction, till your Awakned Souls begin to cry out, *Oh! what shall we do to be saved?* What blessed News will it be to your Concerned Parents, to hear from you such an Enquiry!

Act. 16.
30.

3. Endeavour to impress your Hearts with your absolute need of a *Saviour*. You must know, You cannot be saved now, but in an humble Compliance with the

Comfort for Parents

101

the Terms of the Gospel no more than others; and that must be by looking after Pardoning and Healing Grace in a Redeemer; pardoning Grace, to deliver you from the Condemnation; Healing Grace, to deliver you from the Dominion of Sin. Be assured, that nothing short of this Grace can savingly recover you; *And that this Grace is not Col. 1. to be had, but in a Mediator.* Make ^{19:} it therefore the matter of your Early Inquiry, who this Redeemer is, what he hath done and suffered, and purchased for you, and how you must come to an Interest in Him and His Glorious Purchases.

Act. 4.

12.

H 3

When

Comfort for Parents,

When you hear the Tydings of this *Beloved Saviour*, attend thereunto, as those that are sensible, that you have as Needful a Concern in Him as any. When he is proposed and tender'd to you upon Gospel-terms, know that your Consent is expected, as well as from others; and that now you are past your *Infant-state*, you must be saved in the very same way, and by the very Rules, as Older Persons. Is a Cordial Acceptation of Christ, as their onely *Lord and Saviour* required of others? The same is expected from you. Is a Sincere Resignation of themselves to be entirely the Lord's, required of others? The very same is call'd for from you, without any Exception

tion or Dispensation, *Prov. 8.*
from the 23th. ver. to the end. *1. Tim. 1. 2.*
Labour to settle these things *2. Cor. 3. 18.*
upon your Hearts betimes, for
they are your Life. *1. Tim. 4. 1.*

4. Apply your selves to a serious *Rom. 7. 1.*
Reading the Scriptures, and At- *1. Pet. 1. 2.*
tendance upon Publick Ordinan- *2. Tim. 3. 16.*
ces. As soon as you have learnt
to read, put your selves to Christ's
School, and let the Bible be the
chief Book you desire to learn
in. The Scriptures are for your
Instruction as well as for Others:
Read them, not meerly as a Task,
but as the matter of your De-
light; not to gratifie your Curio-
sity, but as the Blessed Means to *2. Tim. 3. 15.*
make you wise unto Salvation.
Here, as in a Glas, you must

behold your own Wretchedness
Jam. 1. and Misery: And here also you
23. must behold the Matchless Glo-
2 Cor. ry and Excellency of a Redeemer.
3: 18. In this Chrystal Mirrour you
Rom. 7. must see *Sin* to be exceeding sinful;
13. and here also you must see *Christ*
1 Pet. to be exceeding Precious. What-
2. 7. ever is necessary, either to your
2 Tim. 3. present Duty, or future Felicity,
16, 17. must be all learnt from hence.
 Make this blessed Book then
 your Early Companion; it's a
 Book to make you Wise, as
 well as more grown Persons;
 and you cannot be too soon ac-
 quainted with it.

And the better to promote
 your Acquaintance therewith, and
 Improvement thereby, put your
 selves betimes under the Dispen-
 sation

sation of publick Ordinance. Publick Ordinances must help on Private Duties: The Divine Truths, that you read in private, may be more opened and applied with that Heavenly Light and Warmth, as may not only enlighten your Understandings, but inflame your Affections with an Holy Life and Love: Let it be your Delight then, as soon as you are capable to wait daily at Wisdom's Gates, ^{Prov. 8.} and to wait at the Posts of her ^{34.} Doors. And wait with all Seriousness and Reverence, with an earnest Desire and Expectation of the Coming down of the Angel, to heal your Souls, and to make you Sound and Sincere Converts.

For your Sakes, I have
written this in your
hearts.

You

5. Send

5. Send up your early Cries to *Heaven*, that you may not fail of the *Grace of God*. During your uncapable *Infancy*, your *Parents* have prayed for you ; now you must pray for your selves. And you have both as much need, and as many Encouragements to Pray as others. You have as much Need to Pray as Others : For being Guilty before God, you stand in need of Pardoning Mercy ; and your Natures being depraved, you stand in need of Regeneration by the *Spirit of Grace*, as well as others. And who are more obliged to Pray for these *Divine Blessings* for you, than you are for your selves ? Or who have a nearer Concern in you, than you

you have in your dearest selves?
 You have also as many Encouragements to Pray as Others:
 For besides the blessed Encouragements, common to the Generation of Seekers in general, you have Special and Appropriate Promises to encourage you. *I love them that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me.*^{17.}
 Early Seekers are the surest Finders. And who would not see about so Blessed a Duty, that have such Encouragements of Success?

Learn then to make your humble Addresses to the Throne of Grace betimes; and though you cannot Pray as you would, yet strive to Pray as well as you can. Press your Hearts with the Sense of
 your

your Wants ; and that will direct you to such Expressions, as will be acceptable to God, though they may but be Poor and Confused in themselves. If you can say little, yet send up your Sighs and Groans ; and that Broken, Inarticulate Language may have Power with God, and prevail. When you can do no more, tell him in all Humility, that you are resolved to hang at his Door, and lie at his Foot until he bless you. Oh ! how grateful must it be, both to Heaven and Earth, to see you so Early in your Bibles, and upon your Knees, breathing after Christ, and enquiring the Way to the Heavenly Zion !

Rom. 8.
26.

Gen. 23.
26.

This

This is now Early Religion :
 This is the Holy Course I would
 recommend to your Blooming
 Years, both for your own and
 your *Parent's* sake. The Obser-
 vance whereof will be your Crown
 and Joy, whether you live or die.
 If you live to arrive to more Ma-
 turity, it will be your Glory and
 Honour, that you have begun so
 Early with God, as well as your
Parents Delight and Joy : And
 if you die in your tender Minority,
 it will both be your own Peace,
 and your *Parent's Comfort* in your
Latter End.

F I N I S.